
**Rural Development, Agriculture, &
Natural Resources Committee**

HJM 4000

Brief Description: Supporting the continued research, development, production, and application of biochar from our forests and agricultural lands.

Sponsors: Representatives Shea, Fitzgibbon, Dent, Goodman, Eslick, Sells, Stokesbary, Tharinger, DeBolt, Fey, Walsh, Ryu, Maycumber, Blake, Kretz, Doglio, Kloba, Irwin and Young.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Affirms the Legislature's support for biochar research, including research into the production of biochar and research into applications for biochar.

Hearing Date: 1/16/19

Staff: Robert Hatfield (786-7117).

Background:

Biochar is a fine-grained charcoal left behind after pyrolysis of crop residues, livestock manures, or other organic materials. Pyrolysis is the high temperature processing of organic materials in the absence of oxygen.

Biochar is used in multiple applications, including as a soil amendment and in sewage and wastewater treatment. Researchers have found that biochar applied to wet soils can decrease the production of methane and nitrous oxide. Other research has shown that biochar can be useful for restoring degraded soils because of its ability to bind heavy metals.

Summary of Bill:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The House Joint Memorial affirms the Legislature's support for the biochar research efforts of the United States Forest Service, the Agricultural Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, the Washington State University, the Department of Ecology, and other institutions. These research efforts include research to produce biochar from the removal of wildfire fuel loads, from waste agricultural products, and from other waste biomass destined for landfills or combustion.

The House Joint Memorial also affirms the Legislature's support for the research of biochar as an animal feed, remediation tool, landscaping material, and soil amendment for forest and agricultural lands.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.